

Special Events Recycling Toolkit

Guidelines for Event Planners

Special events are those places where people go to participate in organized fun. They range in size from small gatherings to multi-day events that attract hundreds or thousands of people that may travel long distances just to attend. Whatever the event, they all share the common trait of producing garbage. Because events are typically held in a somewhat controllable environment, there is an opportunity to recover significant amounts of this garbage for recovery through reuse, recycling, and composting. The City of Eugene's Solid Waste and Recycling Program (SWR) offers assistance in helping you plan and carry out special events with waste reduction in mind. In addition to providing this written guide to successful waste reduction, SWR also offers materials such as containers, signage, and on-site storage to those events that qualify for these resources. While we cannot supply the actual day-of-event labor, we're hopeful that the equipment and knowledge that we can supply will allow you to have an event that maximizes fun while minimizing the impact to the environment.

Why take the time to recycle at your event?

As an event coordinator, you want people to remember your event for the good time and good value they experienced. But what about the *values* that the event itself embodies? More people recycle regularly than vote. In fact, nearly 90 percent of the garbage collection customers within the city of Eugene are doing their part for the environment by recycling. It is the one environmental activity that people participate in *because* it's so easy. Just over 50 percent of the discards we generate in Lane County are being recycled rather than landfilled. What that means is that our landfill will last longer, we contribute fewer greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere, and we create jobs that are economically and environmentally sustainable. You may be surprised at the willingness of people to recycle at your event, especially when you've provided them with the tools and information they are accustomed to utilizing at home.

Solid Waste and Recycling Program has developed these resources as a result of over six years experience in recycling at special events. The toolkit is designed to provide the event-goer with a standardized and recognizable "look" for recycling at the many events they attend in Eugene. As the toolkit gets employed, more and more residents and visitors will recognize the containers and the materials they are expected to place into them. And if you take the brave step of moderating what kinds of products are utilized at your event, you'll *design* the waste stream to be more recyclable. For instance, instead of providing beverages in non-recyclable plastic cups, compostable paper or compostable plastic products can be included in the organic discards that can be recycled locally. By thoughtfully designing the waste stream prior to the event, the discards may enter a value added composting process that adds benefit to our community rather than piling up in a landfill.

What's in the toolkit?

This toolkit contains everything you'll need to make recycling at your event go smoothly. Everything, that is, except the labor to pull it off. While we will recommend several organizations that may be contacted for labor, you'll need to take ownership of this process. You'll need to make the commitment to follow through on the recommendations made within the toolkit.

If you've got the desire to provide quality recycling at your event, and you've gotten your hands on the toolkit with enough time to participate in the planning necessary, here's what you can get from SWR:

*Up to 65 [containers](#) and liners
designed with recycling in mind.*

*Up to 45 additional recycling and
composting containers.*

Signage that works.

The toolkit consists of an 8'x10' cargo trailer that comes fully equipped with all of the necessary event recycling equipment you'll need to make your recycling experience a success. The trailer will be dropped off and picked up at the event by SWR staff. If a special event requires only a small number of recycling containers, the event will be responsible for pick-up and return of the containers.

I can't believe it! What is the hitch?

The special event must be open to the public and take place within the city limits of Eugene. In addition, there are three things the Solid Waste and Recycling Program will require prior to granting use of this equipment:

1) A completed [application form](#).

2) A refundable deposit. Everything you've borrowed must be returned to us in the same manner in which it was received. We will charge a cleaning fee of \$20.00 per hour should you return our containers in a less than sanitary condition. Loss of and damage to the equipment will deducted from the deposit. Use of the equipment is not guaranteed until the deposit is received.

A refundable deposit in the amount of \$500.00 is due at least 14 days prior to the event for use of the complete toolkit or more than 10 recycling containers. A refundable deposit in the amount of \$100.00 is due at least 14 days prior to the event for use of up to 10 recycling containers only.

3) A signed agreement that transfers the liability for the use of our equipment. If one of your volunteers cuts themselves on a bottle that breaks in our containers, our insurance isn't paying for it, but we want to make sure that yours will. A certificate of liability insurance must be provided as part of the application process.

See [application guidelines](#) for complete details.

So far so good? Great! Now, let's make you a recycling expert

Recycling is a term that encompasses a great many activities. It can also be attached to a great many materials. This guide will tell you what is realistically achievable at a special event. Here are some words and terms that you can expect to encounter when discussing special event recycling. These are the official, City of Eugene mayorally approved definitions:

Compost - organic materials that decompose into a humus rich soil product. Compost includes vegetative food waste, non-plastic coated paper materials, animal bedding, dirt and sod.

PET - This is the kind of plastic that pop and water bottles are constructed from. It is a recyclable plastic if it is in a bottle. Cups and trays made out of PET are not recyclable. You don't need to remove the lids, although containers that contain remnants of the original liquid or somebody's disgusting oral tobacco juice should be emptied prior to sending these items to the recycling facility.

Film plastics - This is the plastic that shrink wrap is made of as well as plastic bags of all types. At events, most film plastics are things like ice bags, bags that noodles or bean sprouts come in, or saran wrap. If you've got a soda vendor, chances are that they will generate shrink wrap in their operations. To be recyclable it must be free of food wastes and other non-film materials.

Biodegradable Foodwares - there is new technology that allows plastics to be derived from agricultural sources like corn and cotton. These can be composted in commercial composting operations similar to those found at Rexius and Lane Forest Products in Eugene. Biodegradable foodwares can also be paper products, provided that there is not a plastic coating. Wax coatings are fine, but polyethylene coatings won't decompose, which makes composters angry. Biodegradable foodwares are hard to find and are still relatively expensive. If you want to use these, contact the Solid Waste and Recycling Program and we'll help.

Garbage hauler - The haulers that provide garbage collection service in Eugene are licensed by the City. They are required to offer free recycling services for glass and plastic containers, tin and aluminum containers, newspapers, cardboard, and other scrap papers, and motor oil. Whichever licensed hauler you hire for garbage collection you should let know that you are working with the City's toolkit, so they are prepared to provide containers that are compatible with their equipment when called upon to remove the recyclables that have been diverted as a result of your work during the event.

Deposit or Redemption Containers - Oregon is a bottle bill state, meaning that all carbonated beverage containers have a five cent deposit attached to them. When these containers are returned to a store that carries the particular brand, they may be redeemed for five cents, typically via a "reverse vending machine". At events, you'll need to decide whether or not to segregate these containers for redemption or not.

Commingling - This is the practice of placing several different kinds of recyclable materials into one container.

Contamination - This term is used to describe those items that don't belong in recycling streams. In spite of, or perhaps because of the local enthusiasm for all things recycling, many people get too enthusiastic about the activity and try to recycle plastic bags in the compost bin, and banana peels in the plastics bin. There are worse things too, like diapers in the glass bin and that is why we will provide you with gloves in the toolkit.

Toter - These are the carts that garbage service providers place recyclables in. There are three sizes; 35, 65, and 90 gallon containers. They are designed to be lifted by hydraulic equipment that empties them automatically into garbage or recycling vehicles.

Dropbox or "dumpster" - This is a container that is employed for the removal of large quantities of garbage, cardboard, or compostable materials. It is pulled onto a collection vehicle known as a "roll-off" truck. Dropboxes come in 20, 30, and occasionally 40 cubic yard containers. Some haulers have segregated dropboxes that are divided into two or three separate areas and are great for special event recycling purposes.

Containers - When a garbage hauler uses this term, they are referring to the one to six cubic yard container that is emptied by a "front-loading" garbage truck. This vehicle has hydraulic arms that stab the container, lift it over the front of the truck, and tip the containers contents into an opening in the top of the truck. "Containers" in the toolkit refer to the 20 to 32 gallon containers that are utilized to collect recyclables at the event site.

Kiosk - Trash cans that stand alone without any recycling opportunity must become a thing of the past at your special event. Instead, a recycling kiosk, with containers for recycling and trash are the best way to maximize recovery. The events with the highest recovery in the region are those events that have staffed kiosks. The presence of a knowledgeable person like a Master Recycler volunteer guarantees that recyclables will be sorted correctly, compostables will be free of plastic and meat contamination, and visitors will be well informed about special events recycling issues.

Recovery Rate - Also termed "recycling rate", this is the figure that you'll want to calculate in order to know how much material was diverted compared to how much material was generated. It allows you to compare your event's recycling efforts against others'. The following equation will determine your rate:

$$\text{Recovery Rate (Percent)} = \frac{\text{Recycling} + \text{Composting}}{\text{Recycling} + \text{Composting} + \text{Landfilling}} \times 100$$

Getting accurate weight data can be a challenge. You can estimate the weight of materials generated and diverted by using the scale to weigh several collection cans in order to get an average container weight. By then simply counting the number of containers, data collection is easier.

So what is recyclable at events held in Eugene?

It depends on the effort that your event wants to put into waste recovery. Here are three levels of recycling effort, perhaps best viewed as a road to progress. If your event has never recycled, go ahead and choose The Basics. If your event is a seasoned recycler, go for the gusto and choose Zero Waste.

The Basics refers to the materials that are typically collected through the curbside collection program. You could collect all or just some of them. Most events try to exclude glass containers from being sold, but more and more water bottles are generated at events as that product gains popularity.

Containers: Usually referred to as GTAP, this is the acronym that stands for Glass, Tin, Aluminum, and Plastic. These are the materials that garbage haulers in Eugene routinely collect during curbside recycling. They have trucks set up for the collection of these materials, and as a result, any GTAP you collect at your event is pretty much guaranteed to be collected by them. The only caveat would be within the plastics realm. Not all plastics are recyclable, even if the item in question has a recycling symbol on it. In Eugene, plastics #1-#5 are recyclable as long as they are a bottle or a tub. #6, polystyrene (trays, block foamed shapes, or cups) are not recyclable. Neither would any #4 bags be included in that mix.

Paper: Any cardboard generated at your event is recyclable, with the exception of waxed boxes. Cardboard is defined as that brown paper material that boxes are made of that has the wavy layer between an outer and inner liner board. There is no need to remove tapes, labels, or staples but cardboard must be flattened. Using a utility knife is the best way to flatten a box. Newsprint is also recyclable, at some events more of this is generated than at others. Consider printing your program or daily list of events on easily recyclable newsprint.

Basic Plus At this kind of event, you've decided to take an extra step and capture some specific materials that are generated by either guests or vendors. Items that would fall into this category include:

- Vegetative food discards - plate scrapings, corn cobs and husks, coffee grounds and filters, food prep items (potato peels, onion skins, egg shells, banana peels, etc)
- Grease - If there are any booths that deep fry foods, they will generate waste grease by the end of the event that they will want to dispose of appropriately.
- Film Plastics - Ice bags, shrink wrap, and other films are generated in greater and greater quantities at events. While you won't find anybody to collect accumulated amounts of this material for you, its pretty easy to drop off at Beverage Recycler's of Oregon Company.
- Lumber - Pallets, booth construction debris, and other scrap woods may be generated at your event. This too can be accumulated for later delivery to either Lane Forest Products or Rexius Forest By-Products.
- Other stuff - How creative can you get? At Autzen Stadium several years ago we collected pom-poms for reuse. If you are looking at the "waste" stream as a resource instead of garbage you'll be amazed by the amount of recovery you can effect.

Zero Waste The saying goes "if you're not for zero waste, how much waste are you for?" Remember, getting to zero waste is probably not ever possible, but as a goal it provides you with a new perspective on how to do things. Most notably, you need to view this as a multi-year goal, complete with policy development. Zero waste efforts are basically aimed at designing the discard stream to be made up of items that are either reusable, recyclable, or compostable. In order to do this, you'll need to exert a fair amount of authority over the event's powers that be, the vendors that participate in the event, and the guests that come to the event. Some local events that have adopted a zero waste policy are the Lane County Fair and the Oregon Country Fair. Both have achieved recycling rates of 65 percent and 81 percent, respectively. To reach zero waste, you'll need more resources than are available within this toolkit. Contact the Solid Waste and Recycling Program to see how we can help you work towards zero waste.

Speaking of help, who provides the services you need in Eugene?

You won't be able to pull off a successful recycling effort without the assistance of several key companies and organizations in Eugene. The following contact list will provide you with a starting point for help in a variety of arenas, including garbage services, recycling services, composters, suppliers of biodegradable materials, vehicle rental services, and more.

Company	Telephone	Contact Person	Service	Notes
Sanipac	736-3600	Katherine Cox	Coordinates commercial recycling services	
Royal Refuse	688-5622	Scott Bales	Provides commercial garbage collection services	
BRING Recycling	746-3023	Damien Czech	Will tell you what kinds of materials they can accept and how it needs to be prepared	
Cash n Carry	344-4042		Supplies biodegradable foodwares	
Beehive Rental	683-4088		Rents golf cart sized vehicles for collection	
Rexius Forest By-Products	342-1835		Composter of organic materials	
Lane Forest Products	345-9085		Composter of organic materials	
Lane County Extension Compost Specialists	682-7320	Cindy Wise	Volunteers with composting expertise.	
Master Recyclers	682-2059	Lorraine Boose	Volunteers with lots of recycling knowledge.	
Beverage Recyclers of Oregon Company	607-2050		Recycles shrink wrap and film plastics	
Eugene Chemical and Rendering Works	995-6025		Provider of grease recycling	

You've got access to equipment, understand the concepts, now you need a timeline

Refer to the following table to make sure your planning efforts are underway with plenty of time to be well organized. This table assumes that the event organizers have bought off on the concept that recycling is going to exist at the event.

Timeline	Task Description	Notes	Status
12 months prior to event	Create recycling policy for your event. As soon as the event is booked.	Worthwhile, especially if you want to control the waste stream by acquiring biodegradable utensils and foodwares.	
12 months prior to event	Call SWR at (541) 682-5542 to reserve the equipment as soon as the event is finalized.		
At least 4 months prior to event	Application is due to SWR.	Questions? Call (541) 682-5542. Equipment use is not guaranteed until deposit is paid.	
3 months prior to event	Put together your recycling crew.	Contact local resources such as Master Recyclers and Compost Specialists.	
2 months prior to event	Hire a garbage hauler to remove garbage and recyclables from your event site.	Ask them to meet you at the site to go over the logistics of dumpster placement, recycling preparation requirements, and scheduling collections.	
2 months prior to event	Secure a processor for compost and determine their feedstock requirements.	Most composting operations require a permit from the DEQ in order to operate.	
1 month prior to event	Secure a contractor for the removal of used grease.	If your event is not going to generate large volumes of grease, work with an existing restaurant to utilize their grease recycling infrastructure.	
14 days prior to event	Deposit is due to SWR no later than 14 days prior to the event.		
14 days prior to event	Determine the locations of the collection kiosks and recycling sortation areas.		
1 week prior to event	Confirm the equipment delivery details with SWR.	Call (541) 682-5542.	
1 week prior to event	Confirm volunteers and develop staffing schedule.	Establishing a check-in helps volunteers to get oriented to the event and stay on track with their work.	
1 day prior to event	Set up containers as needed and distribute throughout your event.	Each container takes approximately 5 minutes to assemble. Plan accordingly.	
Day of event	Ice and beverages set up	Your volunteers need water.	
Day of event	Monitor containers as needed.	It is not always the best practice to continuously empty the recycling bins. Half full containers are the best advertisement you can have.	
Day of event	Clean lids.	Bees are attracted to recycling containers due to spilled liquids and individuals are repelled from recycling if the kiosks are perceived as un-sanitary.	
Day after event	Clean containers, ensure recycling collections, return events recycling equipment to SWR, calculate recovery rate.	CONGRATULATIONS, YOU DID IT!	

Check! You've got the recycling details, but listen to our pitch for waste prevention

Recycling is an activity that over 90 percent of Eugene's collection customers participate in. We know its better than landfilling, which contributes to water and air pollution, but because most events take place within a controlled environment there is lots that you can do to design the waste stream for maximum recycling.

Single serve packaging Soy sauces, ketchups, relishes, and hand and face cleaners are convenient, but they all come with plastic packaging that is non-recyclable and is a contaminant to composting systems. Encourage your vendors to provide bulk dispensers with a paper container.

Compostable foodwares Utensils, cups, plates, clamshells, these kinds of containers are found at most, if not all special events. None of them are recyclable in Eugene, no matter what the recycling symbolism on these items might indicate. Food contamination or lack of end markets doom them for the landfill. Recent breakthroughs in compostable plastic packaging have created opportunities that are worth pursuing if you recognize there will be a fair amount of resistance to these products from your vendors...unless you give them lots of notice about policy changes, and if you can locate a reliable supplier(s) of these products.

Compostable liners The special events recycler has a fantasy. That is to walk up to a "garbage" can, grab the liner and its contents and throw it directly into a bin that is destined for the compost processor knowing that all the packaging is paper or compostable plastic, and that the can liner is compostable plastic as well. Help make this dream a reality by specifying compostable liners for your food waste collection bins and by pursuing compostable foodwares.

Pack it Out Policy When the event is over, vendors make a mad dash for the exits, leaving behind any discards they can get away with. Rugs, broken lawn chairs, crushed coolers, old display racks, and even product is left behind as they race to get to their next event. Make sure they understand the events' goals when it comes to waste. You may want to consider giving an award for the best recycling effort, or conversely, fining a booth when the event staff has to clean up discards left behind.

This is all great, but my event only needs several containers

If you are the organizer of an event to be held in Eugene that is small, or is only targeting a single material, call SWR at (541) 682-5542. We'll make arrangements for you to pick up the containers you need.

For more information contact the City of Eugene Solid Waste and Recycling Program at (541) 682-5542. Applications are available at the Permit & Information Center, 99 W. 10th Ave., Eugene or visit: [www.eugenerecycles.org/PDF/Toolkit application.pdf](http://www.eugenerecycles.org/PDF/Toolkit%20application.pdf).



think
ZERO WASTE